H A R A M B E E

FLAME

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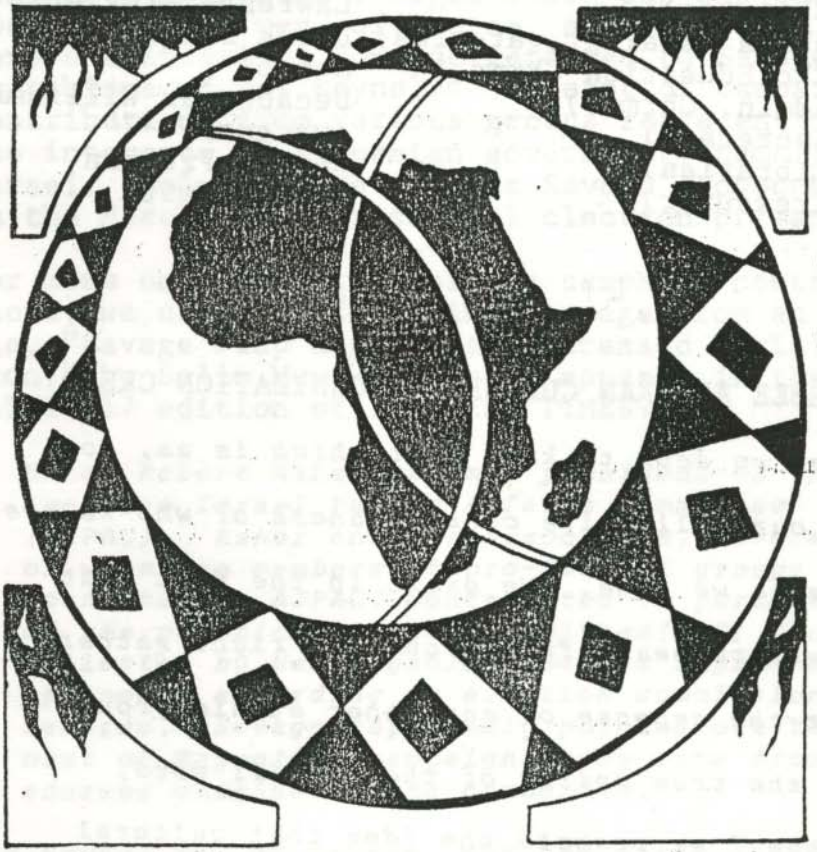

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Africans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "Harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

"SEMITIC": PLAYING WITH WORDS

Earlier this month Congressman Gus Savage of Chicago appeared on "Donahue" and was confronted by the host with a number of accusations and issues of controversy. Gus, not one inclined to be holding his tongue or mincing words, proved to be more than a match for the mess-instigating Phil Donahue. Among the charges which Gus was called upon to answer was, of course, anti-Semitism. More specifically, Donahue referred to Savage's criticisms of Mel Reynolds' receipt of campaign contributions from various groups representing the interests of a foreign government; namely, Israel. Mel Reynolds was Gus Savage's opponent in the March 20 congressional election primary.

For more on this matter of the campaign contributions, we cite the following passage from an article, "Savage Flap Highlights Increased Racial Tension," by Salim Muwakkil which appears in the April 11-17 edition of IN THESE TIMES:

> *Enter Robert Asher, former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Asher and his associates, several of whom are members of pro-Israeli groups connected to AIPAC, contributed 96 percent of the political action committee(PAC) funds collected by Mel Reynolds, Savage's primary opponent, according to election commission records. Savage repeatedly pointed out that most of Reynolds' campaign money came from sources outside of the community.*

Gus Savage is, of course, not the first African person to have been accused of being anti-Semitic or of having made anti-Semitic remarks. It seems as though, these days, that no African leader, spokesperson, or other African in the public arena can speak on behalf of Palestinian rights, question an Israeli policy, or otherwise be critical of Jews or Israel without being attacked as being anti-Semitic. And it is often the case

that Africans of the negro mind-set are pulled into these assaults by their Jewish patrons to function as veritable foot soldiers or, more accurately, bushwackers.

One of the reasons why it seems to be so easy for some Africans to be used by Jews to attack other Africans for being "anti-Semitic" is that many Africans in this country feel a special kinship with Jews because of the holocaust, and other persecution, they experienced. In addition, many of us tend to look upon Jews as being some kind of honorary "blacks" because of the involvement of some Jews in the civil rights movement and related struggles.

And it is this identification with Jews and their historical suffering which brings us to an important, though seldom addressed, question: What does "Semitic" mean and how is the commonly understood meaning of this term of use to Jews and of abuse with regard to African people?

We are generally of the understanding that "Semitic" and "Jewish" are synonomous. But this understanding is an incorrect one. WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD DICTIONARY says the following: "designating or of a major sub-family of the Afro-Asiatic (emphasis added) family of languages, usually divided into eastern (Akkadian), northwestern (Phoenician, Aramaic, Hebrew, etc.), and southwestern (Arabic, Ethiopic, etc.) branches."

We can see, then, that from a linguistic point of reference, most of the people who are Semitic are not Jews. Remaining in the linguistic vein, it is interesting to note that Jews in the U.S., who speak a second language and one that is connected to their Jewishness, typically speak not one of the Semitic languages but Yiddish, which according to available evidence, has its origins in medieval Germany.

Moving beyond the matter of language, we must bear in mind that, while Hebrews may, early in their history, have been of a single stock of the human race; over time, what were to become Jews came to be of several stocks. For example, there are the African Jews(Beta Israel or Felashas) of Ethiopia, who have no physical features that distinguish them, as Jews, from other Africans of the Ethiopic area. There are Asiatic Jews, who have no physical features that would differentiate them from, for example, Asiatic Muslims. And there are European or Euro-American Jews, who cannot be distinguished from European or Euro-American Christians. Interestingly, of these populations of Jews mentioned, it may be the case that the Ethiopic Jews may have the longest unbroken history as followers of Judaism. Nevertheless, Jews are simply people who are adherents of the religion of Judaism.

If Jews, then, are not homogenous with respect to racial stock, what relationship is there between Jewishness and Semitism? We know what "Semitic" is as it relates to languages. And we know, in general terms, what the geographic origins are of those people who developed the family of Semitic languages. And those origins are inclusive of much of northern Africa and Asia Minor but are in no way inclusive of Germany, Poland, and other European countries where we find substantial Jewish populations. With regard to physical characteristics, as they relate to Semitic people, they range from kinkiness and darkness of hair to dark hair that is curly; from very dark brown skin to olive; from broad nose to what some would call the "hooked" nose. There are other characteristics we could speak of. But the point is that, if we accept the validity of the term, "Semitic," we can see that Semitic people, taken as a whole, share physical characteristics that distinguish them from Europeans/Caucasians as a group.

Using these physical characteristics, language, geographical origins, etc. as tools of measurement

of the degree to which a person can be considered "Semitic," it is clear that Jews (those who are adherents of Judaism) comprise a very small minority of Semitic populations. It is most probably the case that the majority of Semitic people are Muslims (adherents of Islam). And while we don't know what percentage of Jews are Semitic, it is evident that a very large number of the Jewish population in the U.S. are of European/Caucasian origin, not Semitic. So, considering what we know about who Semitic people are, there is a striking irony in a Euro-American/Caucasian Jew charging an African Muslim, such as Louis Farrakhan, with being "anti-Semitic."

If the majority of Semitic people, then, are not Jews and many Jews are of European origin, of what use is it for Jewish leaders and spokespersons to promote and perpetuate the false idea that "Jewish" and "Semitic" are synonymous? By promoting this misuse of language, Jews who support the Israeli state, and the oppression of Palestinians upon which that state stands, are able to give themselves a national or group status with rights to a specific homeland. World opinion is more easily swayed to their side if they are able to present themselves as legitimately a homogenous ethnic group than it would be if they only presented themselves as adherents to a particular religious faith. Moreover, by presenting themselves as a historically oppressed nationality, Jews have been able to secure empathy from Africans in the U.S.

If the false forging of a synonymous relationship between Jewishness and Semitism is of benefit to Jews, how is it of detriment to Africans, Africans in the U.S. in particular? Scholars such as Yosef Ben-Jochannan, Chancellor Williams, and Cheikh Anta Diop, have uncovered substantial evidence of African origins of Judaism and the Christianity that grew out of it. They and others have been able to uncover Biblical, archeological, and other information pointing to the African identity of many of the early and important exponents of these

(Cont. on p. 14)

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization (parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. We are not looking for poems which sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

ation Of Islam's Appeal To African Youth In U.S...

...Rap music's recombinant aesthetic encourages he use of 'found' sounds, and the controversial eader(Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam)'s oaring rhetoric has become a staple sample in the ap-music subculture. Indeed, many African-Ameri-an youths received their first exposure to the lack Muslim message on the dance floor...

His fiery oratory urges self-discipline, family everence, ethnic solidarity, hard work, honesty, ivility and all the other virtues held dear by udeo-Christian culture. Unlike other religious eaders, however, Farrakhan is a hit with the oung. For those African-Americans who bemoan lack youth's growing estrangement from the values f their religious heritage but seemingly are pow-rless to stop it, this is a welcome development. aybe Farrakhan's unlikely youth appeal will allow im to succeed where the black church has failed, hey reason...

'...his(Farrakhan's) legitimacy as NOI leader is ased on his strict adherence to Elijah Muhammad's undamental doctrine, yet that adherence has cost im some of the international acclaim he seeks. he orthodox Islamic world rejects as heresies any aspects of the Black Muslim message...The hief heresies are the NOI beliefs that Elijah is he 'last messenger'(and not ibn-Abdullah, Islam's ounder), that God can be manifested as a man and hat spiritual character is genetically determined.

'During Farrakhan's 13-year stint as NOI leader, e has inched it toward orthodox practices. No onger do NOI members disparage some well-grounded slamic practices as mere rituals of Arabic cul-ure. For example, the group now observes the Ra-adan fast during the period officially authorized y Islamic authorities instead of during the month f December, as it did under Elijah's leadership.

'...How is the NOI able to transform irresponsible

drug addicts into functioning members of society, while other programs fail?...'In order to turn addicts around you have to deal with the total human being, especially the spiritual component', said Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammad, the surgeon who heads the NOI's Washington, D.C. chapter and who is the prime mover of the highly praised anti-drug program that has cleaned up a drug-infested neighborhood.

"...'We in the NOI not only explain why drug use is wrong, we also provide them with new aspirations that transcend their personal concerns. We convince them how much they are needed to help raise their people out of the hells of North America'...

"It's a safe bet that few of those rappers sampling Farrakhan's speeches would willingly submit themselves to the disciplined lifestyle required by NOI membership. As a strictly sectarian belief system, the NOI has inherent barriers to mass participation. And the youth culture's pseudo-embrace of NOI doctrine is arguably just another sign of the free-floating anxiety that is evident throughout this nation."

-From March (?) IN THESE TIMES--We would like to be able to tell you the precise edition, page number, and so forth, as we usually do. However, we lost the paper.

Stallings And Liberation Theology Given Support

"Three prominent religious leaders here(Washington, D.C.) declared that Rev. George Stallings, the Black priest who was recently excommunicated from the Catholic Church, represents a 'new day' and predicted that the established Black church would be forced to accept the 'new day' and embrace Black liberation theology in order to survive the next century.

''His excommunication should be viewed as a blessing from Allah'', said Min. Abdul Alim Muhammad of Muhammad's Mosque #4, of the Nation of Islam...

'Black liberation theology--a break from traditional religion recognizing the need for culture and change in the Black condition--has been seen in Christianity, Islam and the Hebrew faith. And, strikingly, it has bridged religious gaps by appealing to cultural unity...

''The breakaway represented the example of the slave outgrowing the boundary of what the slave master gave him'', said Dr. African Ben-Yehuda of the Black Hebrews. Dr. Ben-Yehuda also said the rise of a new thinking among many Blacks is a return to the 'old time religion' taught by the Hon. Elijah Muhammad, Rabbi Ben Ami and others in accord with time and truth...

'Rev. Willie Wilson of the Union Temple Baptist Church...called progressive theology part of the legacy of the early Black church and a weapon to defeat 'the demon of racism'. Dealing with the roots of scripture, which is in Africa, he said, gives Blacks the strength to overcome 'self-doubt, fear and lack of self-esteem'. The Union Temple Spiritual Center, scheduled for completion in December, will be a tribute to freeing the hearts and minds of Blacks. The $5 million center will include a Black history exhibit, cafeteria, health spa, 1,300 seat auditorium, and recording studio. .."

--From "Stallings Forges 'Liberation Theology,'" which appears on pages 6 and 10 of the March 21 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, ILL).

African Alderman Challenges City Of Milwaukee To Improve Conditions For Africans Or Face Revived Panther Party

"Alderman Cichael McGee appeared live on WNOV's 'The Matthew Stelly Talk Show' to discuss the recent controversy regarding his call for 'an armed Black militia' that would be formed in response to the lack of jobs in Milwaukee's inner city area...

"McGee said that he had been interviewed all across the country regarding his proposal...'It's catching on all across the country, and it's heartwarming to see the reception that I've received to my proposal from Blacks all over the country and in Milwaukee'. He said, 'what we've done here in Milwaukee is establish a new bottom line, a new vanguard for Blacks all across the United States regarding the militia'...

"McGee....emphasized as part of his package that the proposals submitted by the Emergency Black Community Task Force be implemented in their entirety...McGee said that after offering these suggestions, it was then that he warned that if these things were not taken seriously, 'that by 1995, I would be willing to take a bunch of young brothers and brothers my age out and we would form a militia and begin armed struggle right here in the United States...in Milwaukee'.

"McGee said that his call for $100 million for jobs were 'emergency employment jobs'. He continued: 'Not nickel and dime type jobs, not any kind of McDonald's-dead-end-type-jobs, but get into jobs where they can have a decent living'...

"McGee said, 'Over that five year period, the militia is going to be working on voter registration, neighborhood cleanups and winning the minds of the people'. McGee said the goal was to make the community safe again...

"McGee said that the five years will provide 'time for us to train ourselves for the kinds of things we need, we need disciplined, trained troops. We're not going to get out here and burn down our own neighborhoods, any more...'"

-From "McGee Talks About The Black Militia And Future Status Of The Inner City," which appears on pp. 1 and 3 of the March 17 MILWAUKEE COURIER.

Rebellions Shaking Up South African "Homelands"

"A rural revolt of unprecedented proportions is set to sweep away two more of South Africa's 'homelands', or bantustans, governments...

"Last week, a military coup overthrew the Ciskei bantustan's 'president-for-life' Lennox Sebe. The new rulers are reportedly seeking good relations with the anti-apartheid Mass Democratic Movement, which is already operating openly at Ciskei.

"The Transvaal 'homelands' of Venda and Gazankulu have been paralyzed by general strikes for nearly a month. Bothe governments look set to topple in a matter of weeks, while a convulsion of political protests has left no area of the country untouched.

"The major explosion of rebellion has been in Bophuthatswana, the site of sporadic resistance for months...

"To counter the mounting protests, many of them unreported, Mangope's government has imposed a state of emergency in its four central Transvaal districts: Bafokeng, Madikwe, Odi(which includes GaRankuwa) and Moretele...

"...He(Mangope) is the only bantustan leader not to have sought to open a line to the African National Congress(ANC) since February, when the movement was unbanned and its leader, Nelson Mandela, released. The leaders of the so-called 'independent homeland nations' are on increasingly shaky ground as Pretoria implicitly acknowledges that the bantustan policy has failed. No country in the world has recognized the bogus 'homeland' independence. The de Klerk regime has seemingly ac-

(Cont. on p. 12)

SANDY BROWN WOMAN

you are desert dunes flowing
from roundish peaks to
hollows grand in their subtle dips
you are the brilliant slopes
screaming out their stark heat
beneath the fiery orb
you are the oasis lying lush
in the crevice of you
monsoon wet and whispering
to me a nomad halted
in my wanderings
to find respite and home in you
to fathom to delve
to explore deep
to immerse myself
in the bewitching viscousness of you,
honey.

Mondo

---

cepted that any genuine talks with the ANC would be on the basis of a unitary South African state..."

-From "Revolts Toppling Bantustan Governments," which appears on p. 18 of the March 21 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.)

Namibia Facing Post-Colonial Budget Difficulties

"For several weeks now, officials of the Namibian government that assumed power on March 21 have been trying to determine what funds would be left in the treasury to pay salaries and other ongoing costs of running a country.

"Independence means the loss of an annual South African subsidy of $200 million to the Namibian budget, even while the Namibian economy remains intertwined with South Africa's...

"Namibian Finance Minister Otto Herrigel has harshly condemned as 'plunder' a South African decision last October to privatize assets of employee pension funds. An estimated $270 million - one study puts the amount nearer to $400 million - has been transferred from the formerly state-controlled Statutory Institutions Pension Fund to major South African insurance firms...

"Privatization has been implemented or attempted in several other areas as well, notably the transportation industry...

"...Increasing numbers of white Namibian business owners and farmers have already begun to chafe at South Africa's tendency to use Namibia as a 'captive' market and to limit the access of Namibian goods to overseas markets. Thus, the attempt to expand Namibia's economic opportunities, independent of South African interests, promises to be a cause around which both black and white Namibians can rally.

(Cont. on p. 14)

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"...The South African rand has served as Namibia's currency and is likely to continue to do so for at least the next two years. According to Herrigel, only one of Namibi's seven banks is controlled by local capital...

"A labor researcher has estimated that as much as $46 million of such funds (individual savings or foreign exchange earnings, retirement funds, etc.) are passing from Namibia to South Africa each month--an amount equal to 38.5% of Namibia's gross national product...

"Getting Namibian beef and other products to the international market presents another challenge. South Africa retains control of Namibia's largest port, a deep-water facility in the enclave of Walvis Bay. The city is also the terminus of Namibia's rail lines to the outside world...

"Last week, African leaders attending a special meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Lusaka, Zambia, called on South Africa to give up sovereignity over the enclave and the adjacent islands. There has been speculation that a compromise plan giving Namibian administrative authority might be concluded between Pretoria and the new government..."

-From "Namibia's Store Looted By Departing Pretoria," which appears on page 13 of the April 4 THE GUARDIAN (N.Y., N.Y.)

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two religions. By snatching Africa away from its connection with Semitic people, European and Euro-American Jews are able, in league with fellow Europeans and Euro-Americans, to keep Africans ignorant of the important roles we played in the early histories of Judaism and Christianity and exclude us from "their" chosen-people status. This fits in quite nicely with the overall workings of racism and its role in the maintenance of "white" supremacy.

BACK IN TIME

On Friday, May 26, 1837, when Colonel Howard Vyse was carrying on archaeological research in lower Egypt, one of his fellow workers, M. Hill, found a piece of iron in the inner joints of the masonry on the south face near the mouth of the air channel of the Great Pyramid built in 2700 B.C. The examination immediately performed by the discoverers showed that the place where the fragment was found had been left intact until then; it was never previously disturbed...

As recently as the Ancient Empire, during which the Egyptians were building the Great Pyramid of Cheops, the metallurgic technique of iron extraction from the ore had already been mastered, and the Egyptians were using it to make, not religious or magical objects, but tools for everyday life. This instrument found in the interstices of the Great Pyramid is a hoe....

M. Leclant states further: "Under the 19th and 20th dynasties(1320-1200 B.C.), one also notices some iron objects: a sword from Seti's first reign (1318-1298 B.C.), a halberd in the foundation sand of Ramses III's temple at Abydos(1198-1166 B.C.), a divine statue in bia-h-pet(iron) of Ramses III. Under the 21st and 22nd dynasties, bolts that fixed a chest, knives, bracelets, a statuette of the god Horus(ca. 847 B.C.), a postherd and the top of a crown."

Source: pp. 64-67 of GREAT AFRICAN THINKERS, VOL. I; from the JOURNAL OF AFRICAN CIVILIZATIONS Series, edited by Ivan Van Sertima.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization will be holding its annual banquet on May 5th, 1990 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. at the State Prison in Lincoln. If you are interested in attending, write to us at P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500. Or call 471-3161 between the hours of 12:30 and 2:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. Ask for the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization sponsor at ext. 3380 or 3379.

Are you interested in music from Africa? KZUM(89.3 fm), a community-access station in Lincoln has several programs which feature, in whole or in part, music from Africa, including: "World Beat" (4-6 p.m., Friday), "Planet Dread"(4-6 p.m., Thursday), "Bug Radio"(10-11 p.m., Monday). Also, radio station KIWR(89.7 fm), Omaha-Council Bluffs, airs a program, "Afropop Worldwide," on Fridays from 11 p.m. to midnight. Unfortunately, KZUM cannot be picked up in Omaha.

According to our most recent communication from the National Malcolm X Commemoration Commission, the following tentative schedule has been established for the commemoration of the life of Malcolm X, which will be held in Omaha.

Friday, May 18: Educational forum on the life, the legacy and the lessons of Malcolm X--6-10 p.m.; reception from 10:30-midnight

Saturday, May 19: Libations, ecumenical prayers and tour of the birthsite/homestead--9:30-10:30 a.m.; National proclamation ceremony--noon-3:00 p.m.; Outdoor festival--3:00-7:00 p.m.; Benefit fund-raiser--10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Sunday, May 20: Meeting with local Malcolm X Day committees--9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

We will run additional information in the May edition of the FLAME.

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